

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 00491 211106Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 IO-13 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 /068 W

-----211113Z 126150 /12

R 210120Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9691

INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

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FOR NELSON EA/ANP FROM IMUS/GULICK

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, PFOR, US

SUBJECT: SOUTH PACIFIC ASSISTANCE

1. CONSULTATIONS WITH NEW ZEALANDERS AND AUSTRALIANS ARE PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY. BOTH APPEAR TO ACCEPT MODEST NATURE OF OUR PROPOSALS AND TO UNDERSTAND LIMITATIONS UNDER WHICH WE MUST OPERATE. WE HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED WITH RANGE OF ACTIVITIES BOTH COUNTRIES ARE UNDERTAKING IN THE ISLANDS AND WILL HAVE TO LOOK HARD TO FIND OPEN AREAS IN WHICH WE CAN PARTICIPATE. BOTH NEW ZEALANDERS AND AUSTRALIANS HAVE AGREED TO ADJUST THEIR OWN PROGRAMS IF NECESSARY TO PROVIDE FOR U.S. INVOLVEMENT.

2. IN WELLINGTON AMBASSADOR SELDEN AGAIN REEMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO PROVISION OF USED ROAD BUILDING EQUIPMENT PRESENTLY IN AMERICAN SAMOA. HE SAID THAT EARLIER THIS YEAR GOVERNOR OF AMERICAN SAMOA HAD AGREED THAT PORTION OF ROAD BUILDING EQUIPMENT COULD BE TRANSFERRED TO WESTERN SAMOA. WOULD APPRECIATE IF YOU COULD AGAIN REVIEW THIS SITUATION AND DETERMINE, IF NOW KNOWN, WHAT SPECIFIC PIECES OF EQUIPMENT COULD BE GIVEN WESTERN SAMOA. WE WOULD PROPOSE

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TO SUGGEST TO SAMOANS THEY TAKE A LOOK AT SUCH EQUIPMENT AND IF AFTER INSPECTION THEY STILL INTERESTED, WE MAKE EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE ON CLEAR "AS IS" BASIS. WOULD APPRECIATE INSTRUCTIONS ON THIS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FROM SUVA FOR APIA FEBRUARY 5.

3. QUESTION OF SHIP FOR FORUM SHIPPING LINE REMAINS DIFFICULT WITH DIFFERING VIEWS BEING EXPRESSED IN WELLINGTON AND

CANBERRA. NEW ZEALAND STRONGLY SUPPORTS LINE AND GAVE INFORMAL, FAINT SIGNALS THAT THEY MIGHT CONSIDER CONTRIBUTING TO FIX UP COSTS OR MORE LIKELY TRY TO PURCHASE THEMSELVES A USED VESSEL FOR THE SAMOANS. NEW ZEALAND ACTION WOULD BE CONDITIONAL ON AUSTRALIANS ALSO HELPING. HOWEVER, HERE IN CANBERRA OFFICIALS HAVE RAISED STRONG DOUBTS AS TO VIABILITY OF SHIPPING LINE AND HAVE EXPRESSED FEAR THAT PROVISION OF SHIP MIGHT BE THE CATALYST TO START SAMOANS ON AN UNWISE VENTURE. BOTH NEW ZEALANDERS AND AUSTRALIANS AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT GIVEN POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, I.E. EFT'S STRONG PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO THE LINE AND ANTICIPATION OF U.S. AID, THAT BEST COURSE IS ONE TO WHICH WE AGREED IN WASHINGTON; THAT IS, PRESENTATION OF SHIP ON "AS IS" BASIS WITH RECOMMENDATION THAT SAMOANS MAY WISH TO EXAMINE IT THEMSELVES OR HAVE SURVEY DONE BEFORE PROCEEDING FURTHER. WE WILL ALSO MAKE CLEAR THAT REHABILITATION COSTS CANNOT BE BORNE BY USG. IF DEPARTMENT HAS ANY ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS BEYOND WHAT WAS DISCUSSED IN WASHINGTON PRIOR TO DEPARTURE WOULD APPRECIATE HEARING IN SUVA. HARGROVE

UNQUOTE
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSTRUCTION, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, HIGHWAYS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CANBER00491
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770022-1054
Format: TEL
From: CANBERRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770131/aaaabath.tel
Line Count: 84
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 211261d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3542191
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOUTH PACIFIC ASSISTANCE
TAGS: EAID, PFOR, ELTN, US, NZ, AS, XP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/211261d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009